

REGULATORY REVIEW TASK FORCE MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, June 16, 2009

8:30 AM

Department of Business Regulation, 1511 Pontiac Avenue, Building 69

Members Present: Michael Marques (Chair), Sue Stenhouse (Vice Chair), Tom Coffey (State Fire Board), Jack Leyden (State Building Code Commission), Jack Chartier (State Fire Marshal), Peter Spinella (Spinnaker Group/Commercial Real Estate), Sandra Powell (Dept. of Labor and Training), Tom Kogut (Public Utilities Commission), Scott Wolf (Grow Smart RI), Mark Carruolo (City of Warwick/Planning), Michael Solomon (Treasury), Kelly Carello (Secretary of State), Steve Carlotti (Hinkley Allen Law/Partner), Greg Mancini (Build RI), Sally Strachan (Division of Motor Vehicles), Michael Sullivan (Dept of Environmental Management), Michael O'Connell (Resource Recovery), Jared Rhodes (Statewide Planning Program), Jeff Willis (Coastal Resources Management Council) Kevin Flynn (RI Division of Planning)

Members Not Present: Grover Fugate (Coastal Resources Management Council), Mike Cassidy (City of Pawtucket/Planning), David Sullivan (Division of Taxation).

Others Present: Autumn Gould

Meeting was called to order at 8:30 a.m. by Michael Marques, chair.

Minutes from the first meeting were unanimously approved.

Chairman Marques welcomed participants to the meeting. Due to a scheduling conflict, the discussions at this meeting would be suspended early and another gathering of the Task Force would be placed on the calendar. He reiterated the focus of the review encompasses small and large business development within the State.

Kelly Carello, representing the Secretary of State's Office First Stop Business Information Center gave a brief presentation on the activities and concerns her office encounters on a daily basis. Her office compiled comprehensive packets with pertinent information and contact numbers for a variety of business models, but she indicated that new businesses still need advocates and mentors for follow through, including financing and assistance with business planning. A goal of the Information Center is to upload the information onto their website, making it available to the public for easy access. Kelly supplied the Task Force with copies of a handout from TiBA Solutions that outlines a one-stop database for business, as an example of a possible solution, although there is a monetary investment for this program.

Michael Sullivan, Director of the Dept. of Environmental Management,

said the DEM has created an Office of Customer and Technical Assistance that aids business owners. Projects that fit certain criteria are deemed “special projects,” and are pushed along in the permitting process. Mr. Sullivan said the metrics that decide a “special project” need to be defined and refined.

Issue: Communication between state and local governments and the business community is lacking.

Proposed Solution: Create an online database containing extensive lists of listed and non-listed properties, similar to existing databases Co-Star and LoopNet. This would be a centralized place for all the pertaining information and would be available to the public.

Issue: Businesses must face multiple boards and obtain numerous permits before getting approval, even though some of these boards have overlapping jurisdiction. There is no central responsibility to manage all of these different components. All of these processes are sequential and dependent on one or another process.

Proposed Solution: Require municipal approval up-front for projects. This would avoid wasting time and money in the permitting process if the community has no interest in obtaining this new business. New projects need to follow their prospective towns’ economic development plans so predictability, transparency and orderliness

are the focuses. Another solution to streamline this process is allowing simultaneous public hearings for departments with similar requirements (i.e. DEM and CRMC). This would require a statutory approval.

Issue: Lack of competition between cities and towns for new businesses.

Proposed Solution: Create incentives for cities and towns, such as allowing the municipalities to keep a percentage of their tax revenue, to foster competition between the municipalities as to increase economic development.

Sue Stenhouse asked the members to please provide input specific to their organization or agency regarding their current business interactions and suggestions for improvements. A questionnaire will be mailed to the Task Force to ascertain the group's impressions of the proposals to date.

The next meeting of the Regulatory Review Task Force will be on Tuesday, June 30, 2009 at 8:30 AM at Department of Business Regulation.

Meeting adjourned at 9:30 a.m.